

Sustainability News

City of El Paso



Volume 1, Issue 4

Sustainability Goals

The City's Sustainability Plan team is refining its strategic plan for city-wide sustainability efforts. Here are some examples of some of the goals the team has drafted:

Air Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by: 2% in two years, 10% in five years, and 15% in 10 years.

Buildings The City of El Paso is considering implementing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Existing Buildings at one of its facilities as a trial.

Vibrant Community Every member of our community is actively engaged in sustainable practices with a plan to guide those efforts.

Energy The City of El Paso is reducing its energy consumption by 30% over the next five years.

Land The City of El Paso will incorporate current and future needs of both citizens and natural resources into its land planning efforts.

Resource Conservation The City of El Paso is increasing its landfill diversion rate to 25% by 2013.

Social Concerns Every household in the community has equal access to the tools necessary to lead a sustainable lifestyle.

Transportation The City of El Paso is developing a Sustainable Fleet Plan to maximize fuel efficiency, optimize fleet composition and optimize fleet usage.

Water The City of El Paso is utilizing reclaimed water as an irrigation source where the infrastructure exists, reducing the demand on potable sources by that same amount.

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Things You Can (and should) be Recycling

- Cell Phones
- Rechargeable batteries
- TV's
- Clothes
- Printer Cartridges
- Computers
- Backpacks
- Carpet Pad
- Nike's
- Plastic Bags
- Eyeglasses
- Paint
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Christmas Lights

For details, check out the September issue of www.realsimple.com

Green Building Grant Program...

Did you know El Paso has one of the nation's richest green building grant programs? In September of 2007, City Council approved an extraordinary grant pro-



gram that rewards developers who use environmentally sound, energy efficient practices and achieve LEED certification. The rewards start at \$50,000 and can go all the way up to \$400,000. For a relatively small increase in construction costs, most projects see a payback in terms of energy efficiency, de-

creased maintenance and operations costs and quantifiable improvements for the building's occupants. The green building grant program and our own LEED building program are both designed to encourage developers to build environmentally-friendly buildings.



Twelve Days to a Sustainable Christmas

A recent study by PNC Wealth Management says it would cost you \$86,609 to buy everything in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song this year. As an alternative to mortgaging your home for the traditional 12 gifts, consider these 12 sustainable ideas for a happy, healthy holiday:

Day 1—Give a homemade gift or Christmas decoration.

Try making your own handmade gifts, Christmas cards and decorations.

Day 2—Carry reusable bags.

When buying presents in the mad rush up to Christmas, remember to bring your reusable bags. We produce 25% more waste (25 million more tons) during the holiday season. Try consolidating your shopping into fewer bags and say no at the check-out for a bag for a single item. In doing so, you will reduce the impacts on the environment from the manufacture and disposal of plastic bags and reduce waste.

Day 3—Give green gadgets like a solar powered cell phone charger.

Think also about practical, valuable gifts such as smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Day 4—Give charity, recycled, or electronic holiday cards this year.

You can double your giving by sending charity cards because your purchase supports a good cause while sending good wishes to friends and family. Home-made cards add a personal touch to your message and usually cost much less. Many internet sites carry



free electronic cards. Also try to reuse or recycle your cards—you could reuse them next year as gift tags.

Day 5—Give 5 hours of your time.

Pledge to spend time with, rather than money on, family and friends. For example offer to help in the garden, with homework, babysitting etc.

Sustainability involves balancing social, environmental and economic factors. Spending time with family and friends is a great way to enhance our lives in all these areas.

Day 6—Make a donation to a charity in someone's name.

The heart of Christmas is about giving. There are many people both nearby and far away that are desperately in need. Take a moment to give to a charity this Christmas and help someone else enjoy the day. Buy yourself a present for the year by signing up for a monthly donation to a good cause.

Day 7—Give family passes to the zoo, concerts, museums or sporting events.

A gift that doesn't need wrapped and that will foster time together is sure to be appreciated.

Day 8—Give potted plants.

Give a beautiful living gift that helps purify indoor air. Take some cuttings from your own favorite plants & pot them up in planters as gifts for friends.

Day 9—Give gifts produced locally (like cowboy boots, saddle blankets or gift certificates to hometown restaurants.)

Supporting local businesses helps maintain a healthy local economy and reduces greenhouse emissions by avoiding the need to be ship material over long distances.

Day 10—Give the gift that keeps on giving.

Many charities and environmental organizations offer gift services which not only solve the problem of the gift for



the person who has everything, but also help others or the environment for years to come. Sponsor a sustaining gift like a goat, chickens, cattle or tree seedlings for someone in the developing world. These gifts are designed to both supply needs for the receiving family and multiply so they can meet the needs of the surrounding village.

Day 11—Give a sustainable gift, like a smart power strip, or a bus pass, or a backyard composter

Think about sustainability with your gift list and you'll come up with some interesting new ideas. There are many unusual and useful products on the market which have been designed with the benefit of modern technology and a desire to reduce our impacts on the environment. Buying more sustainable products for Christmas reduces the impacts on the environment for the life of the gift, supports innovative new ideas and usually provides an interesting talking point on the day.

Day 12—Give green cars

If you can afford it you might consider a Prius in a pear tree...

